Augmentation of passenger amenities at stations is a continuous process and is undertaken through Annual Works Programme depending upon need, availability of funds.

Reduction in Travelling time of trains

1289. SHRI D. RAJA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the railways has studied ways to reduce the travelling time of trains plying between Trivandrum and Delhi and Chennai and Delhi;

(b) whether it is a fact that trains on above routes take long and circuitous routes and create major hardships for people of Tamil Nadu and Kerala;

(c) what steps are proposed to find long term solutions to create a better route for connecting Northern and Southern destinations; and

(d) in what way, the railways can find some short term solutions to reduce journey time on the North-South routes alongwith the details of the steps proposed in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (d) Following trains running from New Delhi/Nizamuddin to Chennai and Thiruvananthapuram (Trivandrum) have been speeded up from 01.12.2006.

(1) 2625 Thiruvananthapuram-New Delhi Kerala Express by 145 minutes.

(2) 2626 New Delhi-Thiruvananthapuram Kerala Express by 60 minutes.

(3) 2643 Thiruvananthapuram-Nizamuddin Express by 110 minutes.

(4) 2644 Nizamuddin-Thiruvananthapuram Express by 60 minutes.

(5) 2431 Thiruvananthapuram-Nizamuddin Rajdhani Express by 15 minutes.

(6) 2621 Chennai-New Delhi Tamil Nadu Express by 25 minutes.

Trains between New Delhi and Thiruvananthapuram are running *via* two different major routes *viz* 1st route *via* Nagpur, Vijayawada, Coimbatore, Ernakulam and 2nd one *via* Vadodara, Madgaon, Ernakulam. 2625/2626 Thiruvananthapuram-New Delhi Kerala Express running *via* 1st route takes 50'05/51'20 hours and 2431/2432 Nizamuddin-Thiruvananthapuram Express running *via* 2nd route takes 41'10742'20" hours.

Trains between New Delhi and Chennai are running *via* Nagpur and Vijayawada. 2621/ 2622 New Delhi-Chennai Tamil Nadu Express takes 33'/32'30" hours and 2611/2612 Nizamuddin-Chennai Garib Rath Express takes 28'10"/28'10" hours.

Closing of unmanned Level Crossings

1290. SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Supreme Court has asked the Railways to file a status report on the proposal to close down all unmanned level crossings in the country to prevent accidents;

(b) if so, what are the total number of unmanned level crossings in the country at present, State-wise;

(c) whether mostly the accidents are occurring on these unmanned level crossings;

(d) if so, whether Government has accepted the Supreme Court's order in this regard; and

(e) if not, the main reasons therefor?